

# LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

## Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **January 24, 2006, Work Session**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1**

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **Housing and Neighborhoods**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discuss Lynchburg demographics as they relate to housing and neighborhood quality. Determine if and what policies should be established by City Council to help guide future decision making regarding such issues as CDBG/HOME funding distribution and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects.

**SUMMARY:** The City of Lynchburg and various non-profit housing groups have addressed the issue of affordable housing on a piece-meal and case-by-case basis rather than via a strategic policy. Examples of affordable housing initiatives, that require City Council action, include those of 1) the Lynchburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority (LRHA), which oversees four public housing developments and the Section 8 voucher program, 2) Lynchburg Neighborhood Development Foundation (LNDF), which rehabilitates historic buildings for apartments using the LIHTC program, 3) Lynchburg Community Action Group (Lyn-CAG), which provides home repair assistance and rehabilitates historic buildings for single family houses, 4) Habitat for Humanity, which provides labor and interest free mortgages to build new houses for homeownership, and 5) Rush Lifetime Homes, which renovates and builds houses for disabled people.

All of the above mentioned non-profits receive CDBG and/or HOME funds through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The amount that each non-profit receives is based on decisions made by City Council. Additionally, LNDF and certain private developers (i.e., Regency Investments and Landmark Asset Services) have requested funding through the LIHTC program. City Council must vote on LIHTC application endorsements.

Other decisions made by City Council include neighborhood improvement initiatives. Examples include funding for the Property Maintenance Program and the recently formed Neighborhood Alliance Network aimed at strengthening leadership in inner city neighborhoods to improve neighborhood quality-of life.

The Department of Community Planning & Development's Community Development Planner has undertaken a project to research and analyze issues related to housing and neighborhoods, particularly blighted neighborhoods. The goal is to provide Council with pertinent data and information that will help it make the best decisions to eliminate blight and substandard housing in the City. Nichole Gilkeson will present her findings and some suggested conclusions during Council's work session.

With a new round of Low Income Housing Tax Credit applications due to be submitted, Council will once again be asked to endorse projects to improve housing opportunities for low to moderate income individuals in the City. It is hoped that a discussion of the findings of the Community Development Planner will suggest some appropriate policy guidance as Council considers requests for endorsement.

**PRIOR ACTIONS:** In past years, City Council has had various discussions and voted on various resolutions regarding housing and neighborhoods. For example, Council had discussions in 1998 to consider establishing an official Housing Policy and in 1999-2002 to discuss the housing components of the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, Council has voted on numerous occasions to support (or not) certain LIHTC requests and to approve the Comprehensive Plan 2002-2020, which included a chapter entitled Neighborhoods & Housing.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

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ATTACHMENTS: Power point presentation

REVIEWED BY: lkp